

He said later he felt the company commander, who said he was going to get reinforcements, had abandoned his group of men. "It made me all the more determined to accomplish our mission," he told the PBS series "American Valor." "Because at that time the Army was segregated. It was thought that we were unable to fight."

No black soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during World War II, although Baker did receive the Purple Heart, a Bronze Star and Distinguished Service Cross.

In 1993, U.S. Army officials contracted Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., to determine if there was a racial disparity in the way Medal of Honor recipients were selected. The university researchers found that there was, and recommended 10 soldiers to receive it. From that list, Pentagon officials picked seven.

But there was one problem—the statutory limit for presentation had expired. Congress was required to pass legislation that allowed the president to award the Medals of Honor so long after the action.

Baker was the only recipient still living; the other six soldiers received their awards posthumously, with their medals being presented to family members.

Baker was initially rebuffed when he tried to join the Army. Baker said in an interview with public television that a recruiter told him that there was no quota for enlisting "you people."

Reflecting on life in a segregated Army unit, he told *The Washington Post*, "I was an angry young man. We were all angry. But we had a job to do, and we did it." He added, though, that he "knew things would get better, and I'm glad to say that I'm here to see it."

Baker returned to his northern Idaho home after the war. When he received a call telling him he was to receive a Medal of Honor, at first he was astonished. Then he was angry.

"It was something that I felt should have been done a long time ago," he told Idaho public television. "If I was worthy of receiving the Medal of Honor in 1945, I should have received it then."

Baker called his 1997 memoir "Lasting Valor."

U.S. Rep. Walt Minnick said he met Vernon Baker in the 1990s when the soldier spoke at a College of Idaho event. Minnick said he'd been expecting a tough, battle-hardened soldier, but says he was instead struck by Baker's gentle demeanor. Minnick said Baker's valor on the battlefield in Italy was a rebuke of racist policies that dominated the U.S. military into the middle of the last century.

"His actions on the front line demonstrates better than words can describe why discrimination and segregation in the military was both unfair and absolutely inconsistent with an effective fighting force," Minnick said. "He demonstrated a degree of courage few people have. He was prepared to give his life for his country—a country in which he was considered a second-class citizen."

Baker was born in 1919 in Wyoming. Orphaned as a small child, he was raised by his grandparents in Cheyenne. He was working as a railroad porter when he decided to join the Army in mid-1941, a few months before Pearl Harbor.

In 2004, Baker underwent emergency surgery to remove a malignant brain tumor. Before he fell ill, he had failed to sign up for benefits from Veterans Affairs and Medicare, not realizing what the requirements were. Community members and politicians in Idaho pitched in to help him get aid for his unpaid medical bills.

Hodge said Baker continued to battle brain cancer over the next years, and he recently

began receiving hospice care at his home. Baker was surrounded by his family when he died Tuesday evening.

Hodge said Baker's wife, Heidi Baker, plans to have a memorial service in St. Maries but the arrangements have not yet been made. He said Heidi Baker also planned to talk with military officials about possibly having Baker buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

A war hero, Baker was also a man of peace. After receiving the award, he told a newspaper reporter for the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*: "I hope never to see someone else having the Medal of Honor hung around his neck by the president of the United States. You young people coming up, please don't take war as a solution to a problem. God gave you the brains to think and not to use violence as a means to an end."

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

GANN VALLEY, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the 125th anniversary of the population center of our State, Gann Valley. This community, just 15 minutes away from the Missouri River, is the county seat of Buffalo County.

Gann Valley was named after Herst Gann, one of the area's pioneers as well as the publisher of one of two local newspapers. Gann also donated the courthouse when the town was founded on January 14, 1885. Since the railroad never came through, a freight line made three trips a week to neighboring Kimball to bring in goods for the town and ship out the products from the town's creamery.

Gann Valley will spend Saturday, July 31, celebrating this historic milestone. A wagon train will arrive in the morning to kick off the festivities, followed by a parade, games, a dance, and more. Small towns like Gann Valley are the backbone of South Dakota, and I am proud to recognize the people who live in and around this great community.●

TIMBER LAKE, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the 100th anniversary of Timber Lake, SD, on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation. The county seat of Dewey County, this small town embodies South Dakota values.

Originally established by the Secretary of the Interior, the land plots were so popular that 1,000 people camped out when the land went on sale. The town grew quickly with many "tent stores" springing up. Settlers arrived before the railroad did, so building materials were brought in by wagon. The Milwaukee Railroad quickly realized the demand for a railroad through Timber Lake, and by May, trains were reaching the thriving new town. Timber Lake officially incorporated in February 1911. The census in 1920 showed a population of 555, making it officially a city of the second class.

In the early 1920s, sewer lines were laid for a town septic system. The

digging machine unearthed a metal object, which was put in the bank. Upon further examination, and after it was cleaned, it was determined to be a sculpture of two hands clasping a rose branch with a snake winding through the hands. The origin of this unexpected find is still unknown.

To honor its 100 year anniversary, the Timber Lake community is having a "Days of 1910" celebration, complete with a banquet, a talent show and play, and a viewing of 4-H exhibits. I am proud to recognize them on their historic milestone, and I look forward to seeing what else this great town accomplishes.●

TRIBUTE TO SONYA DAMSKER LEFKOVITS

• Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Sonya Damsker Lefkovits, who is being honored by the Columbiana Chamber of Commerce for her dedication and service to her community.

Sonya was born May 6, 1923, in Memphis, TN, to Louis and Helen Richberger Damsker. Raised in Tyler, TX, Sonya graduated from Tyler High School and went on to attend Louisiana State University, where she earned a degree in public school music. Following her graduation at LSU, Sonya moved to Birmingham to work at the Jewish Welfare Board as its first activities director. It was there that she met her future husband, Norman Leo Lefkovits.

In July, 1947, Sonya married Norman Leo Lefkovits, and she moved to Columbiana to operate the Lefkovits family mercantile store, *The Columbiana Leader*. Since arriving in Columbiana, AL, nearly 63 years ago, Sonya has been an integral member of her community. In 1949, she became a charter member of the Vignette Club, which gave her the opportunity to participate in various community projects. Among her proudest achievements was working on the building committee during the construction of the Columbia Library when she was chairman of the Columbiana Library Board.

Sonya has also held various community leadership positions. She was a member of the Shelby County High School Band Boosters Club, the women's coordinator for the Columbiana Civil Defense Organization, and co-chairman of the Shelby County Civil War Centennial Commemoration. Sonya was an active member of the Shelby County Historical Society. In 1999, Sonya helped to form the Columbiana Merchants and Professional Association, where she worked on the Columbiana Downtown Renovation Committee. She also served as an ambassador to the South Shelby Chamber of Commerce.

Sonya has two children, Norman Leo Lefkovits, Jr. and Marsha Phyllis Lefkovits, both of whom now reside in California. In the early 1980s, Marsha

served with distinction as a member of my staff in Washington, DC. Soon, Sonya will be leaving Columbiana to join her children on the west coast.

I am sure that Sonya will be sorely missed in Columbiana, whose residents will reap the benefits of her contributions to their community for years to come. Regardless of where she resides, I know that she will continue to touch the lives of everyone fortunate enough to meet her.

I wish Sonya luck on her journey west, and I ask this entire Senate to join me in recognizing and honoring the life and career of my good friend Sonya Lefkovits.●

RECOGNIZING AXIOM TECHNOLOGIES

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I have long held the belief that the availability of broadband undoubtedly contributes to business expansion, employment growth, and greater educational opportunities. Indeed, the Internet can truly transform the way small firms do business. This is particularly the case in places like my home State of Maine, which is not only largely rural, but is home to over 150,000 small businesses. As such, it is with great admiration that today I recognize Axiom Technologies, based in the town of Machias, for the firm's outstanding commitment to the goal of bringing broadband Internet service to rural Maine communities that have not previously known its remarkable power.

Founded in 2004 by Nelson Geel and Chris Moody, Axiom originally sought to provide inexpensive consulting services to small businesses and communities in Washington County, Maine's easternmost county. Yet the two quickly realized that there was a growing desire for affordable broadband in the area, which was largely overlooked by corporate providers. As such, the company reevaluated its business vision in an attempt to allow rural areas of the State to benefit from the same advantages of broadband Internet provided to Maine's more urban regions.

In addition to operating on a sustainable financial basis, Axiom Technologies prides itself on always attempting to hold true to a unique social mission as well. Axiom is well aware "of the central role that business plays in society" and seeks to solidify this responsibility "by initiating innovative ways to improve the quality of life in the communities in which [it] operate[s]." Not only has the company done this by spreading equality of access to information through broadband services, but its employees also take it upon themselves to improve their community.

One shining example is Susan Corbett, Axiom's CEO, who was instrumental in the development of a type of community-minded, service-based listserv for Washington County called Mighty Women. In 2006, she, along with some of her entrepreneurial and social

service peers, created the "rolodex" of e-mail contacts that could be solicited to assist those in need throughout eastern Maine. Indeed, in 2009, the Mighty Women listserv mobilized to raise last minute funds for Washington county children who were in need of toys and warm clothing for the holiday season. With just a week before Christmas, the group raised approximately \$3,000 to help give the children the holiday joy that they deserved.

People such as Susan Corbett are representative of the family-like mentality which Axiom Technologies hopes to foster among its employees and within the greater community. Small businesses around the country have historically helped build a sense of community in the areas in which they operate, and Axiom is no exception. The ability to access information via broadband should be something available to all people across America, and Axiom Technologies has built its business around fulfilling this goal. The company has done it economically, but most inspiringly, Axiom has attempted to promote the well-being of the people in the communities they serve. When a business cares about helping others as does Axiom, the community can rest assured that Axiom's employees share their goals and aspirations for improving the overall community.

While small businesses are duly noted as the drivers of the Nation's economy, they cannot be overlooked for their positive social impacts on the communities in which they operate. Although they may serve a relatively small market, Axiom is certainly on the cutting edge when it comes to promoting broadband equality, a goal of national importance. I thank everyone at Axiom for their numerous and varied contributions to the health of Maine's economic future and general welfare, and I wish them much success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ALTON "RED" FRANKLIN

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, today I wish to acknowledge Coach Alton "Red" Franklin for his dedicated service to Louisiana and in particular to Haynesville High School in northern Louisiana. I would like to take some time to make a few remarks on his accomplishments.

Throughout his distinguished career as the Haynesville High School football coach, he won 27 district championships and participated in the State playoffs 31 times. The team had 8 undefeated seasons and 191 shutouts. Coach Franklin led the team to 11 State championships in four decades winning four consecutive State championships from 1993 to 1996. Coach Franklin was inducted in the Louisiana High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1991. He was also named State coach of the year 6 times and district coach of the year 23 times throughout his career.

When Coach Franklin retired in January of 2002, he retired as the second most winningest football coach in Louisiana history and number 15 nationally. Coach Franklin had accumulated a remarkable record of 366 wins, 76 losses, and 8 ties.

Even after his outstanding career, Red Franklin continued to be actively involved in his community, returning to Haynesville High in 2003 as a volunteer assistant coach for his son David, the current head coach. In 2009, Red Franklin won his first State championship as an assistant coach to his son. On July 10, 2010, Red Franklin received the high honor of being inducted into the National Federation of State High School Associations Hall of Fame Class of 2010.

Thus, today, I honor a fellow Louisianian, Coach Alton "Red" Franklin, for his exceptional and distinguished service to Haynesville High School and to our State.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:13 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2693. An act to amend title VII of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4380. An act to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to modify temporarily certain rates of duty, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5566. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit interstate commerce in animal crush videos, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5716. An act to provide for enhancement of existing efforts in support of research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities to advance technologies for the safe and environmentally responsible exploration, development, and production of oil and natural gas resources.

The House also announced it passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1053. An act to amend the National Law Enforcement Museum Act to extend the termination date.

The message further announced that the House agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 292. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Aerospace Week, and for other purposes.

At 3:00 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4213) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 4:31 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by